Shortfall in achievement of export target

121. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the target of export fixed for the current financial year;

(b) whether it is a fact that even 70 per cent of the target has not been achieved as the financial year is coming to an end; and

(c) the steps taken to achieve the target within the financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The export target for the year 2007-08 has been set at US$ 160 billion.

(b) As per the latest available trade data, exports reached a level of US $ 111 billion (provisional) during April-December, 2007-08 achieving nearly 70 per cent of the target set for the current year.

(c) Steps taken to achieve target include export promotion initiatives such as Implementation of the Focus Product Scheme, Focus market Scheme, Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana, Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme, Exprot Promotion Capital Goods Scheme, etc. Apart from this, special package have also been announced in respect of export items which were adversely affected by the appreciation of Rupee.

Free trade among IBSA

122. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) are working on free trade areas among them;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether IBSA has signed certain inter-governmental pacts in the areas of public administration governance, tax administration arts, cultural co-operation, higher education, wind resources, health, medicines and social development, etc.;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) how far will these have transforming effect on the lives of people of these countries, especially the poor masses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) A working group of SACU (consisting of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland), India and MERCOSUR (consisting of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay & Uruguay) has held a meeting on 6 October, 2007 in South Africa and exchanged views for exploring the possibility of a trilateral trade arrangement between them.